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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that community colleges can contain costs by reducing faculty reassigned time, defined as a conscious or deliberate management action, either discretionary or mandated, that releases full-time faculty from teaching duties in order to perform other tasks. According to the paper, standard financial accounting systems have a difficult time tracking the use of reassigned time, and when it is tracked, the dollar figures are often misleading. The course that the reassigned full-time faculty member teaches is usually given to part-time faculty, and the costs are shown under separate budgets for part-time faculty. The cost of reassigned time is valued at this rate, rather than at a rate that utilizes what economists call opportunity costs. This conception refers to the value or benefit that is given up by choosing one alternative over another. The author used Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) in Arizona for this case study. He found that 439 (41.37%) of 1,061 full-time faculty in the 10-member college district had a total of 2,134 hours of released time. This study estimates that the opportunity costs of released time for the MCCCD 1999-2000 academic year were more than $10 million. (Contains 15 references and 7 tables.) (NB)

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The Reduction of Faculty Reassigned Time as a Community College Cost Containment Initiative: A Case Study of the Maricopa County Community College District

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the use of faculty reassigned time in the Maricopa County Community District. In the first section of the paper, background material is introduced which explores the faculty and administrative obstacles that have prevented cost containment mechanisms from being applied to faculty reassigned time.

The second part of the paper examines the extent and use of faculty reassigned time in the Maricopa County Community College District MCCCD). It is shown that faculty reassigned time in the MCCCD amounts to over 2100 hours per semester, or over 4200 hours for an academic year. 'This translates into lost teaching time of 142 full time teaching equivalents every year at an annual (opportunity) cost of over 10 million dollars. In terms of teaching, this means that over 13 percent of the full time faculty is actually engaged in reassigned time activities that have no direct relationship to time in the classroom. On a budgetary level, it is also estimated that reassigned time accounts for over eight percent of the instructional budget.

Strategies to reduce faculty-reassigned time include the use of overload payments in lieu of reassigned time, the elimination of unnecessary reassigned time activities, and the transfer of some reassigned time projects/tasks to non-instructional personnel. The implementation of these strategies will require changes in existing personnel policy as well as in the development of a management information system that will track campus usage of reassigned time. These changes, if implemented, can reduce reassigned time and thus generate positive employment and financial gains that are currently not realized. This can become especially important in times of fiscal austerity.

The Reduction of Faculty Reassigned Time as a Community College Cost Containment Initiative: A Case Study of the Maricopa County Community College District

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Introduction

The thesis of this paper is that the reduction of faculty reassigned time can be a significant community college cost containment initiative if it is properly analyzed and managed. The essay accomplishes this by proceeding along two major stages. In the first stage, an overall framework is developed that summarizes the fiscal background/problems of community colleges along with some recent and current community college cost containment efforts. After this has been accomplished, the concept of reassigned time is then introduced, along with an analysis that underscores the bureaucratic and economic reasons that have made community college administration and faculty resist the reduction of faculty reassigned time as a useful cost containment mechanism.

Once this overall framework has been developed, the essay proceeds to the second stage by using the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) as a case study to highlight some for the problems noted in the previous section. After the rationale and limitations of the study have been discussed, an effort is made to analyze the magnitude and impact of faculty reassigned time on the MCCCD. Because the impact is substantial, an array of policy options is recommended as tentative suggestions. Finally, a concluding section summarizes key aspects of this paper and suggests what future developments might bring in this area.

Cost Containment Efforts by Community Colleges

Background

The fiscal crisis in higher education is not a new development. The last two decades have seen declining Federal and State government support along with citizen resistance to increases in tuition. The net result has been a declining or stagnant revenue base that has proven

to be shaky and even unreliable. College and university administrators have thus been forced to operate in a fiscal environment that is often constrained, uncertain, and limited.

These fiscal constraints have also been accompanied by rising costs. While the reasons for this are numerous, they certainly include the costs that have been incurred to meet Federal and state mandates in such areas as civil rights, OSHA, EPA, and ADA. Each of these mandates has required expensive changes in construction design; each has required that colleges hire staff to monitor compliance. But in addition to these unfunded mandates, there has also been the impact of technology. Computerization, alone, for example, is a significant higher education cost that did not exist 40 years ago (Baumol and Blackman, 1995).

Community colleges, as a junior member of the higher education establishment, are not immune to the revenue and cost pressures previously described. Although their revenue base is more varied and perhaps more stable (Breneman and Nelson, 1981). They have also faced declining state and local support. In addition, and because of their growing size and importance, community colleges also face similar cost pressures, including those generated by diseconomies of scale (Kress, 1977). So the fiscal environment that community colleges face has also been characterized by an uncertain future.

In attempting to deal with this problem, some in the higher education establishment have seen cost containment as the only viable option in an environment characterized by stagnant revenues. This approach has been multifaceted and has involved the development of new strategies (Simpson, 1991) as well as the use of novel accounting techniques that target and monitor "hidden" costs (P. Miller and R. Miller, 1991; Turk, 1993). Other research has been more program and personnel based, with emphasis shifting to the reduction of specific program

and regulatory costs (Miceri, 2000) and to a recognition that part time faculty generate costs that must be tracked if efficiencies are to be achieved (Culverhouse and Nance, 1992).

All these approaches are generic and not institution based. They stress process, technique, strategy and implementation while eschewing the actual environment of specific organizations. In the next section, this deficiency is corrected by focusing on cost containment efforts conducted by community colleges.

Recent and Current Cost Containment Efforts

The best documented case study of a community college cost containment effort involved Prince George's Community College (PGCC) in Maryland. In response to a legislative mandate, and to a 10 percent budget cut, PGCC instituted cost containment measures in hiring, professional development, and purchasing. This was supplemented by an administrative reorganization that emphasized early retirement, instructional services fees, and an examination of programs that were expensive relative to benefits and revenues (Clagett, 1994). Unfortunately, this also included employee furloughs. And these cost containment efforts were conducted in a tough atmosphere created by budget cuts and legislative mandate.

A more sanguine and more detailed cost containment effort was conducted by Longview Community College during the construction of its liberal arts building. In this case study, a real effort was made to reduce costs by developing project design options (Roarck, 2001). Still another approach, done under non emergency conditions and distinguishing between short term and long term cost reductions, was initiated by the three California state higher education systems. But these approaches also utilized salary and hiring freezes as a cost containment

initiative (Kaganoff, 1998). There thus appeared to be little or no effort to analyze faculty workload.

This appears to be a common practice. Most cost containment efforts in the faculty personnel area focus on early retirement, salary and hiring freezes, and layoffs based on crude workload indices. There thus appears to be no micro analysis of faculty workloads in order to determine if cost savings are feasible. When this has been done, it has usually been either descriptive (Silvers, Attinasi, and McGregor, 1998), or it has been couched in a framework that provides a rationale for the use of adjuncts (Restructuring Higher Education, 1997).

Because an analysis of faculty workload has never been seen as a cost containment option, there has been no in depth study to determine what savings could be obtained. This is a serious weakness, for as the next sections will show the management of faculty reassigned time can be an important part of any cost containment initiative. But before this is done, it is necessary to understand why faculty reassigned time has been such an elusive concept to track and monitor. In the next section, this background is provided.

Why Faculty Reassigned Time is Not Considered

Definition of Reassigned Time

In this paper, "released time" and "reassigned time" are used interchangeably to describe a conscious and deliberate management action, either discretionary or mandated, that releases full time faculty from classroom (teaching) duties in order to perform other tasks. This reassigned time can be mandated by either policy manuals, collective bargaining agreements, or accrediting bodies. But it can also be discretionary when management decides that a particular task, assignment or project needs to be done, and that it cannot be accomplished by existing non

instructional staff. In addition, it is also implicitly recognized that the particular task, assignment or project requires an amount of time and effort that goes beyond what is normally expected of a faculty member in terms of office hours and committee assignments.

The Hidden Problem of Opportunity Cost

Standard financial accounting systems have a difficult time tracking the use of reassigned time, and when it is tracked, the dollar figures are usually misleading. This omission occurs because when a faculty member is given reassigned time, the course that he or she is teaching is usually assigned to an adjunct faculty member. Thus, the cost of the reassigned time is shown under separate budgets for part time faculty. As a result, many colleges do not know the cost and magnitude of reassigned time at their colleges, for the information is frequently scattered in several budgets.

But even when the dollars that are expended for reassigned time are known, the figures are often misleading because the cost is frequently valued at the rate that is paid for part time faculty. In effect, the reassigned time is valued using explicit accounting costs rather than at a rate that would utilize what economists call "opportunity costs." This latter conception of cost is more extensive, for it refers to the value or benefit that you give up by choosing one alternative over another. If reassigned time was valued using opportunity cost, the cost of reassigned time would be much higher, for you would have to value it at the full time faculty member's pay rate.

This differential can be significant in the Maricopa County Community College District. As an example, giving a full time faculty member three hours of reassigned time can be valued at $1800 if the adjunct faculty rate is used. If the full time faculty rate is used, however, the cost

can be well in excess of $7,000.00. Thus, the failure to recognize opportunity cost in reassigned time calculations can create serious distortions in terms of cost impact.

The Role of Faculty Governance

Faculty reassigned time is thus a hidden cost that is frequently obscured by the failure to make a distinction between explicit accounting costs and opportunity costs. While this confusion in large measure explains why faculty reassigned time has not been carefully examined, it is not the only reason, for there are cultural, behavioral, and organizational dynamics that have prevented the issue of faculty reassigned time from being given explicit recognition as a cost containment option.

One major obstacle is faculty governance. Faculty governance plays a large role in supporting faculty reassigned time. Governance also provides an ideology that makes administrators loathe to tackle the reassigned time issue. Simply put, the precepts of faculty governance dictate that faculty should play a major role in the governance of colleges and universities. And this means, all too frequently, that reassigned time becomes the vehicle through which faculty make governance contributions in the areas of curriculum, administration, and the faculty senate. The role of faculty governance, and the reassigned time it implicitly supports, is even given moral legitimacy by the American Association of University Professor's "Red Book" (Policy Documents & Reports, 1995). Faculty governance is also mandated by the accrediting bodies, as exemplified by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions: An Overview, 2001).

Faculty governance is thus a concept that is deeply rooted in the history, culture, and oversight bodies of higher education. Because faculty reassigned time is frequently seen as a

vehicle by which faculty governance is realized, there is a natural reluctance to temper with the reassigned time mechanism.

Faculty Bureaucratic Obstacles

In addition to the impediment of faculty governance, there are also other bureaucratic obstacles that stand in the way of efficiently and effectively using faculty reassigned time. These obstacles are associated with bureaucratic behavior that is linked to perks, power, and knowledge. In effect, internal organizational dynamics associated with the faculty culture will frequently make the management of reassigned time an arduous task. This then creates a climate in which administrative leadership is frequently afraid to act (Benveniste, 1983).

This can be clearly seen by examining the teaching duties of a community college faculty member. Normally, faculty at a community college will be required to teach five classes a semester. These classes, moreover, may be the same subject, so teaching frequently becomes dull and repetitious after a number of years have passed. For many of these faculty, then, reassigned time becomes a welcome relief away from the classroom. In this environment, faculty will actively seek reassigned time for anything so as to reduce their teaching duties. And those same faculty will soon regard this reassigned time not as a temporary work detail, but as a permanent perk that should not be taken away. In effect, what was originally a flexible management initiative becomes an entitlement that is not subject to either change or revision, an entitlement that is defended by a well entrenched special interest group.

This phenomenon is also reinforced by the nature of the reassigned time work itself. In many cases, the tasks or project that the faculty member is working on is very specialized and very critical to the college or university. Over time, the faculty member, by working on this

specialized task, assumes power, influence and status by virtue of being the only one capable of knowing or doing whatever it is that the reassigned time was meant to provide. In sum, the reassigned time gives the faculty member the power of expertise over the administrators who originally authorized it! And this power becomes even more pronounced when the administrators are unable to evaluate the work that is being performed.

Because of this dynamic, reassigned time frequently assumes a life of its own and continues long after the original need was met and/or the objective attained. What was once a temporary work detail becomes an encrusted perk with its own life and rationale. It becomes untouchable.

Administration Bureaucratic Obstacles

The previous sections highlighted the obstacles that administrators would face in trying to reduce faculty reassigned time. But there are also internal behavioral dynamics that will cause administrators to either ignore the issues raised by faculty reassigned time or to even encourage its continued and greater use. What is being said here, quite simply, is that administrators may be part of the problem and may be resistant to any reduction in faculty reassigned time.

There are several reasons for this phenomenon. First, the dispensation of reassigned time may be seen by some administrators as a mechanism by which they can reinforce their power and influence over faculty. Reassigned time thus becomes a tool by which faculty become beholden to administrators. The careful and systematic use of reassigned time, then, can buy loyalty, support, and mute possible dissatisfaction and discontent.

Second, faculty reassigned time can help administrators to look good by appearing to lower the cost of non instructional overhead. In effect, reassigned time becomes a vehicle by

which administrative tasks are shifted over to faculty ranks. If this was not done, the cost of non instructional administration might be much higher, making these administrators look bad in the eyes of the public, taxpayers, and regulatory agencies. The fact that reassigned time is largely a hidden cost that does not recognize opportunity costs only makes this transfer that much easier.

The two reasons previously cited provide strong behavioral pressures for administrators to encourage the widespread use of faculty reassigned time and to avoid the task of monitoring and tracking its usage. It is little wonder, then, that the issue of faculty reassigned time has been largely ignored in the literature and case studies.

The Maricopa County Community College District: A Case Study

General Comments

The previous section highlighted the numerous bureaucratic problems that are associated with analyzing, assessing and managing faculty reassigned time at community colleges. Yet how serious is the problem? What is the magnitude either in dollars, staff, or time, that the utilization of faculty reassigned time generates? In this section, an attempt will be made to answer these questions by assessing the use of faculty reassigned time at the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). Needless to say, it should be stated at the outset that no attempt is made – either intentional or otherwise – to impugn or detract from the current operational practices of the ten individual colleges that make up the MCCCD or even the MCCCD itself. As will be shown later, the practice, use and even identification of reassigned time is a refractory and difficulty task, making responsibility, authority and accountability moot and rather beside the point at this junction in time.

Rationale for Study

There are several reasons why this case study was conducted. First, a comprehensive analysis of the use and cost of reassigned time in the MCCCD has never been made. Indeed, any information describing the utilization and cost benefit impact of reassigned time is largely fragmented and decentralized, making a system wide analysis difficult to do. In sum, there is no central management information system that tracks the cost (however defined) of using reassigned time, as well as its presumed benefits, to the ten colleges within the MCCCD.

This omission is not unique to the MCCCD. A literature search using ERIC and other databases suggests that there is a paucity of information on this topic. While reasons for this knowledge gap are certainly numerous, the chief culprit is probably the fact, as discussed in the first part of this paper, that reassigned time is and remains a hidden cost that does not show up in any financial control systems.

Aside from this omission, a second reason for studying reassigned time is that the residential full time faculty, and their work in the classrooms promoting teaching and learning, is the raison d'être of the MCCCD. Because faculty and students are ultimately the heart and soul of what MCCCD is to the citizens and taxpayers of Maricopa County, it becomes critical to analyze and assess any development (such as reassigned time) that pulls teachers out of the classrooms in order to perform other work that does not directly benefit students.

This essay, then, is premised on the assumption that the existence of the MCCCD is largely based on the excellence of its classroom instruction, which is in turn based on the outstanding teaching contributions made by the residential faculty. Following this, it then becomes axiomatic that reassigned time, if carried to an extreme, can prove detrimental to the classroom experience by shifting residential faculty resources into non classroom settings.

It should be noted that this premise has long been stated in the MCCCD's Residential Faculty Policies (RFP) Manual. Indeed, section 5.2 of the RFP quite explicitly deals with full time teacher equivalents (FTTEs) from the standpoint of teacher student ratios and the equally famous 90/10 benchmark. What is missing, of course, is the impact that reassigned time has on the achievement of these laudable standards. But it is the position of this paper that reassigned time can be effectively managed, controlled, and reduced, with the consequent result that quality instruction can be promoted, thus benefiting citizens, taxpayers, and students.

Finally, there is the issue of accountability. Reassigned time is a valuable resource that should be efficiently and effectively utilized in order to reach goals that benefit the wider MCCCD. As such, the Presidents, Deans, and District Officials should be accountable for their use of this resource in the same way that they are expected to account for their utilization of staff, financial, and physical resources. But because reassigned time has been largely an invisible asset, no managerial accountability has been either expected or required. Hopefully, this essay will begin to change the way faculty reassigned time is viewed and subsequently analyzed and managed.

Limitations/Assumptions of Study

The analysis contained in this essay carries some limitations and assumptions that should be stated at the outset. First, the reassigned time data that was utilized in the study came directly from the ten colleges. (Because it includes personal employee information, this is not included, although it is available upon request.) Given this, the accuracy of the information submitted cannot be verified. But perhaps just as important is the format under which the information was received. The ten colleges compiled and formatted the data in a variety of ways (not shown),

making aggregation difficult for the purpose of computing such reassigned time subtotals as RFP mandated, college discretionary, and the like, as well as breakouts between yearly and semester totals. The numbers used in these subtotals, then, are tentative and should be used with caution pending the development of a District management information system that can track this on a central, standard, and independent basis.

Second, there is the issue of internal and external benchmarks. In an ideal world, the ratios and benchmarks that were developed for the MCCCD in this report would be contrasted with national benchmarks in order to determine the relative position of the MCCCD in the utilization of reassigned time. Unfortunately, however, no national study appears to have been made, so these comparisons cannot be made.

In lieu of this, it might be useful to track MCCCD's use of reassigned time over a number of years. This would have the advantage of showing trends that a one year study would obviously miss. While this would be laudable, the data in this report was limited to the 1999-2000 academic year, so this trend analysis could not be performed. As a result, the findings in this report should be viewed as a static "snapshot" glimpse into the use of reassigned time throughout the MCCCD.

Third, it should be pointed out that this study is a *macro* assessment of reassigned time that emphasizes proportions and ratios. As such, no judgments have been made as to the worth of any individual project or contribution. This micro analysis is certainly needed and would have to be made if overall reductions in reassigned time are to be achieved. At a minimum, such an analysis would focus on the expected benefit of the project and whether the project warrants the reassigned time that was given.

Finally, it is a cardinal assumption of this report that reassigned time in the MCCCD is excessive and can be reduced through the elimination of unnecessary projects/tasks, by the use of overload payments in lieu of reassigned time, and by the transfer of at least some of these tasks to non instructional personnel. Concerning the latter, it is felt that the 160 percent increase in MCCCD non instructional personnel over the last 20 years has created a cushion of support that can handle many of the tasks that are currently performed by full time faculty using reassigned time.

Scope of Problem

As was previously stated, each of the ten colleges submitted reassigned time data under a variety of different formats. In Appendix A, an effort was made to simplify this data by developing tables 1-6. The narrative that follows is based on these tables.

Table 1 shows the reassigned time that was expended by each of the colleges for a semester during the 1999-2000 academic year. As can be seen from the table, the total reassigned time expended was just over 2,134 hours, or over 4,200 hours for the academic year. While the overall college mean was 213 hours, this varied considerably by college. Estrella Mountain (EMCC) and South Mountain (SMCC), for example, utilized slightly over 80 hours each, while Glendale Community College (GCC) expended just over 400 hours. This latter figure is 36 percent more than its larger sister, Mesa Community College (MCC), which showed 294 hours.

The next step in the analysis is to relate the expended reassigned hours at each college to the faculty who received it. Table 2 lists the total faculty at each college as well as the number of faculty at each college who received reassigned time. (Faculty employment numbers were

provided by the District Office.) The fifth column on this table then shows the percentage of faculty who received the reassigned time at each college.

These figures are striking. Out of a total faculty of 1,061, at least 439 received some type of reassigned time, which translates into 41 percent of all faculty. Although this is an average, the individual college percentage does vary, from a low of 32 percent (SMCC) to a high of 100 percent for Rio Salado. The size of the college, moreover, does not appear to affect this percentage, for while only 21 percent of MCC faculty receive reassigned time, the corresponding figure for GCC is 46 percent.

The last column on this table shows the average (mean) reassigned time for each faculty member who received it. For the District as a whole, it can be seen that the 439 faculty who received reassigned time utilized, on average, 4.86 hours per semester, or just over 32 percent of their teaching load if we use 15 hours as a base. In effect, this means that 41 percent of the residential full time faculty spent almost one third of their time on non teaching tasks. Aside from equity issues, this placed a burden on the 60 percent of faculty who receive no reassigned time away from the classroom.

The utilization of reassigned time represents an opportunity cost (if not an accounting cost), for it frequently pulls the most experienced teachers out of the classroom in order to perform other tasks. Yet as we mentioned earlier, opportunity costs are notoriously "hidden" and thus not easily quantifiable.

Table 3 tries to surmount this difficulty by converting the expended reassigned time hours into full time teaching equivalents (FTTEs). For the District as a whole, the 2,134 reassigned hours expended each semester translates into 142 full time teaching equivalents. This

means, in brief, that if all reassigned time hours were eliminated, the MCCCD would have the benefit of 142 full time residential teachers who could be placed in classrooms!

The impact of this opportunity cost, moreover, varies widely by campus. Although the average reassigned time (RT) FTTE per campus is 14.22, its impact is the lowest at EMCC where it is only 5.38 FTTEs. As to be expected, these numbers are larger relative to the size of the college. Despite this, however, Scottsdale community College has a RT FTTE as high as its larger cousin MCC, while GCC has the largest RT FTTE of all, coming in just under 27 FTTEs per semester!

The opportunity cost associated with the use of reassigned time hours can be crudely given a dollar value if we have faculty compensation figures. Table 4 attempts to do this by linking the RT FTTEs (column 1) with the average annual residential faculty compensation (wages and benefits) provided to faculty on each campus. These figures are shown in column 2 and were provided by the District Office. A simple multiplication of these two columns generates the information contained in column 3, which gives the yearly reassigned time faculty-cost for each campus.

Again, the numbers are startling. For the entire MCCCD, the estimated yearly cost of using reassigned time comes to over 10 million dollars. While this reflects an opportunity cost, and not an accounting cost, the magnitude of the number does suggest how deeply ingrained (and costly) reassigned time is in the MCCCD. (In Appendix A, yearly costs were also computed using "short term" compensation figures that were provided by the District. The costs are lower, but still significant."

Of course, these costs vary widely by campus, so that the average cost of slightly over a million dollars per campus is misleading at best. As an example, two of the smaller colleges

(EMCC and SMCC) carry yearly RT costs of less than $400,000, while GCC, by contrast, comes in at slightly under two million dollars per year. This latter figure, moveover, comprises just under 20 percent of the total yearly reassigned time cost in the MCCCD. Also, and once again, college size does not appear to matter, for SCC carries roughly the same reassigned time costs as the much larger MCC.

Another way to measure the impact of reassigned time is to compare the yearly reassigned time illustrated with residential faculty costs that were just developed, to each college's instructional budget. Table 5 illustrates this comparison. The last column on the table shows the yearly reassigned time/residential faculty cost as a percentage of the 1999-2000 instructional budget. For the entire MCCCD, the cost of reassigned time takes up 8.37 percent of the total instructional budget. In other words, slightly under 9 percent of the instructional budget goes to residential faculty who do not directly perform teaching/classroom tasks.

This loss of residential full time faculty in the classroom is further highlighted in Table 6. This table relates the loss, each semester, i.e., the reassigned time FTTEs at each college, to that college's total faculty. In effect, this table shows the percentage of faculty teaching time that is actually engaged in reassigned time activities. So, and as an example, the faculty at SCC spends just under 14 percent of their accountable teaching time on non teaching activities, for which they have been reassigned. For the entire MCCCD, the percentage is just under 13 percent.

The sixth table show the opportunity costs, measured in terms of dollars and FTTEs, of reassigned time to the MCCCD. But what would happen if a concerted effort were made to reduce reassigned time throughout the District? Table 7 attempts to answer this question. As the table illustrates, every 10 percent reduction in reassigned time generated 14.22 FTTEs, for an estimated financial impact (gain) of over a million dollars because the equivalent amount of new

faculty (assuming identical replacements) would not have to be hired. If reassigned time were to be reduced by 50 percent, then 71 FTTEs would be generated, for a financial gain of over 5 million dollars.

These figures, of course, are used simply to illustrate the positive gains that can be accrued from reducing reassigned time. In the next section, some policy options are discussed that attempt to wrestle with this challenge.

Recommendations : An Array of Policy Options

Changes in Personnel Policy

If reductions in reassigned time are to be achieved, there will have to be changes in current personnel policy. Five suggested changes are illustrated below with specific reference to the MCCCD faculty personnel policy manual known as "Residential Faculty Policies" (RFP). While this is pertinent to the MCCCD, many of these suggestions would also change personnel practices that are currently found in other community colleges around the country.

First, a concerted effort should be made to use overload rate payments (per section C.3.3 of the RFP) in lieu of reassigned time. While this may lead to a scarcity of applicants for projects, this could be overcome by the adoption of a District personnel policy that would have two mechanisms. The first mechanism involves college discretionary reassigned time. In such cases the President/Dean would first make the assignments available to all faculty, using the incentive of an overload payment rate. But if no applicants come forth, (and this is the second mechanism), then and only then can reassigned time be used. Aside from reducing reassigned time, this approach also has the virtue of possibly minimizing cronyism and favoritism.

Second, during the next meet and confer session, an effort should be made to reduce RFP mandated reassigned time provisions and/or by substituting overload payment rates in lieu of reassigned time. RFP sections that should be focused on include: C.18, C.19.2, D.2.2, D.1.4.2, 2.12.1, and 2.12.2 In addition, section D.1.4.3 should be eliminated or modified so as to encourage the use of overload payments.

Third, except for Department/Division Chair reassigned time, there should be an absolute limit on the amount of reassigned time that a faculty member can receive in any one year, with a suggested cap of 15 hours being the limit. This particular provision will help to minimize abuse. It will also allow for a more equitable distribution of reassigned time within the faculty ranks. As we saw earlier, this is a particularly noteworthy problem, for 60 percent of the faculty receive no reassigned time at all.

Fourth, the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, in conjunction with District Institutional Research, should conduct a national survey of how large community college districts handle the reassigned time issue, with the ultimate goal of developing national benchmarks. Further, there should also be an internal analysis of how reassigned time has changed within the last five years. Such information is needed if useful benchmarks are to be developed. From these base numbers, subsequent comparisons can be generated that are both internal and external to the MCCCD. As a result, needed corrective interventions can then be made on a continuous basis.

Fifth, the District Human Resources Office should also develop a time reporting system that tracks how individual faculty members use reassigned time each pay period. This will help to insure that work is being performed for time received. A simple document that showed what work was being performed over a given time period, for example, would promote accountability.

It would also help to chart progress towards the attainment of any goals that the reassigned time is being used to achieve.

Development of a Management Information System

It is also recommended that the District Office, under the Direction of the Vice Chancellor for Business Services, begin the development of an information system that will track the use and cost of reassigned time throughout the District. Such a yearly report would indicate the number of faculty, by college, that receive reassigned time, the total hours expended, and the authorizing source. At a minimum, the report would also show the number of lost FTTEs and the consequent opportunity cost based on the replacement of residential faculty. In effect, an effort would be made to crystallize these hidden opportunity costs so as to improve decision-making. If this were accomplished, resource allocations would almost certainly improve, for costs would be known.

Micro Assessment by the Individual Colleges

As a first step in implementing any needed reductions, it is recommended that the Chancellor direct each college to prepare a report that examines its reassigned time usage. These reports would focus on strategies for reducing reassigned time with an emphasis on the elimination of reassigned time projects/tasks that are clearly not needed at this time. This would also focus on the identification of reassigned time projects/tasks that could be transferred to non-instructional personnel and the use of overload payments in lieu of reassigned time. Finally, specific strategies would be developed that would lead to the curtailment of excessive (15 hours) reassigned time usage by individual faculty members.

Suggested Management Goals & Controls (for illustration purposes only)

Once a system is in place that tracks reassigned time, controls can be instituted that would attempt to reduce the use of reassigned time over a period of years. If the goal were to reduce reassigned time by 50 percent over three years, targeted goals might include an overall reduction in reassigned hours from 2,134 to 1,067. Or, an overall reduction in FTTE devoted to reassigned time might be targeted and then reduced from 142 to 71. Seen from another perspective, this would then also involve a reduction in reassigned time average RFP cost from $10,392,000 to $5,200,000 with a subsequent 50 percent reduction in the reassigned time RFP cost as a percentage of the instructional budget.

Colleges that failed to meet their prorated targeted goals would not be authorized to hire new full time faculty. In effect, failure to achieve targeted reductions would result in a freeze on faculty hiring for that year. Such penalties would be needed if compliance was to be assured. Needless to say, provisions could be written that would recognize the flexibility needed for emergencies and other unplanned events.

Conclusion

As the analysis of the MCCCD suggests, significant cost savings can be generated if faculty reassigned time is carefully analyzed and managed. Yet significant obstacles, ranging from governance, to hidden opportunity costs, and to faculty and administrative bureaucratic inertia, will probably make any type of cost containment initiative difficult if not impossible to achieve. This suggests that this type of cost containment strategy can only be implemented if there is strong leadership that is conscious of costs in all its ramifications. Such leadership styles can probably only arise, though, if the external threats (red ink, taxpayer revolt) are sufficiently

serious so as to force a shift in existing management paradigms. While this is not likely to happen in the MCCCD, for its financial base is stable and secure, other community colleges not so fortunate may find the analysis and findings of this paper to be helpful during times of fiscal and budgetary difficulties.

Future fiscal developments suggest that community colleges will continue to face budgetary difficulties that stem from reduced local and state funding as well as from stagnant tuition revenue growth. In such an environment, the need to emphasize cost containment will be renewed. Because full time faculty salaries are a significant component of total community college costs, how faculty are being utilized will come increasingly into focus, with reassigned time being seen as one cost containment initiative that could be implemented.

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APPENDIX A

SPREADSHEETS

MCCCD REASSIGNE D TIME (RT), IN HOURS, PER SEMESTER

COLLEGE	CGCC	EMCC	SCC	PVCC	SMCC	RSCC	
REASSIGN ED TIME/TYPE							
Dept./Division Chair	66	27	69.7	72	26.4	NA	
Other/RFPMandated	35.2	6	81	13.5	12	NA	
District Projects	19	22.2	49	22.5	22	NA	
College Discretionary	58.4	25.5	71.5	41.6	22	NA	
TOTAL REASSIGNED TIME (RT)	178.6	80.7	295.2	149.6	82.4		199
TOTAL FACULTY RECEIVING REASSIGNED TIME	35	26	69	25	15		19
TOTAL FACULTY	60	34	139	73	47		19
% OF FACULTY RECEIVING REASSIGNED TIME	58%	76%	50%	34%	32%		100%
MEAN RT PER FACU LTY	5.1	3.1	4.28	5.98	5.49		10.47
FTTE =Full Time Teaching Equiv TOTAL RT /15 = RT FTTE	11.91	5.38	19.68	9.97	5.49		13.27
YEARLY COST = FTTE X AVG. RFP COST PER FACULTY	844,371	359,959	1,423,434	711,728	392,106		935,044
YEARLY COST = FTTE X AVG. SHORT TERM COST PER FACULTY	535,628	284,187	951,331	506,376	298,107		702,925
RT FTTE/TOTAL FACULTY	19.85%	15.80%	14.20%	13.65%	11.68%		69.84%
1999-2000 Instructional Budget	6,339,943	4,057,177	14,316,569	8,282,140	4,697,576		10,833,105
YEARLY RT RFP COST AS A % OF TOTAL COLLEGE INSTRUCTIONAL BUDGET	13.32%	8.87%	9.94%	8.59%	8.35%		8.63%

MCCCD REASSIGNED TIME (RT), IN HOURS, PER SEMESTER

COLLEGE	PC	GWCC	MCC	GCC	TOTAL
REASSIGNED TIME/TYPE					
Dept./Division Chair	96	44	85.4	72.23	
Other/RFP Mandated	88	39.5	42	72.23	
District Projects	39.5	31.5	39.3	30	
College Discretionary	48.1	67.75	127.6	225.6	
TOTAL REASSIGNED TIME (RT)	271.6	182.75	294.3	400.6	2134.21
TOTAL FACULTY RECEIVING REASSIGNED TIME	62	38	53	97	439
TOTAL FACULTY	161	69	247	212	1061
% OF FACULTY RECEIVING REASSIGNED TIME	38.50%	55%	21.45%	45.75%	41.37%
MEAN RT PER FACULTY THAT RECEIVE IT	4.38	4.8	5.55	4.13	4.86
FTTE = Full Time Teaching Equiv TOTAL RT /15 = RT FTTE	18.11	12.18	19.62	26.67	142.28
YEARLY COST = FTTE X AVG. RFP COST PER FACULTY	1,334,598	854,536	1,466,418	1,990,328	10,392,700
YEARLY COST = FTTE X AVG SHORT TERM COST PER FACULTY	928,843	674,638	1,027,381	1,433,592	7,391,730
RT FTTE/TOTAL FACULTY	11.24%	17.65%	7.94%	12.58%	13.40%
1999-2000 Instructional Budget	16,292,362	8,318,132	27,319,005	23,364,356	124,109,938
YEARLY RT RFP COST AS A % OF TOTAL COLLEGE INSTRUCTIONAL BUDGET	8.19%	10.27%	5.37%	8.52%	8.37%

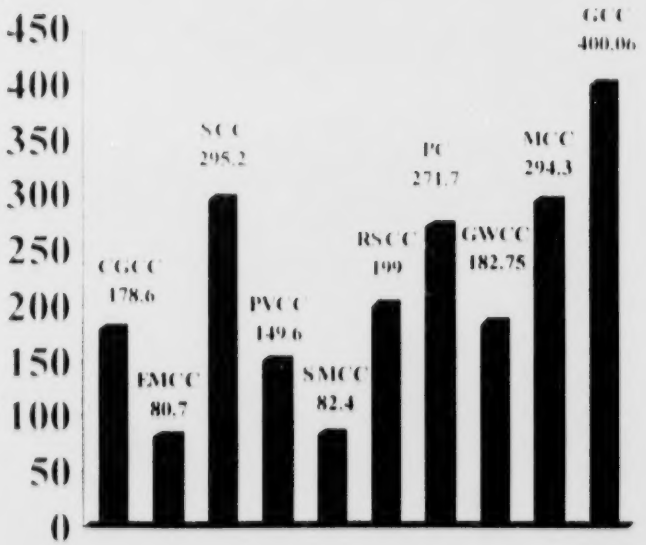
APPENDIX B

TABLES

MCCD Reassigned Time (RT), In Credit Hours, Per Semester, *By College 1999-2000

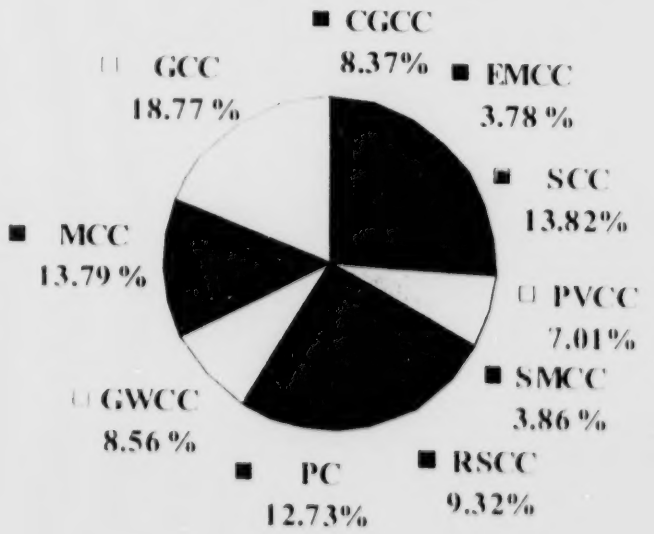
Table 1

Total RT Hours



Total 2,134.21

% of Total



Total 100.0

College Mean = 213.4

Yearly Total = 4268 (Approximate)

*Because of problems with individual college submissions, some semesters were spring, others were fall.

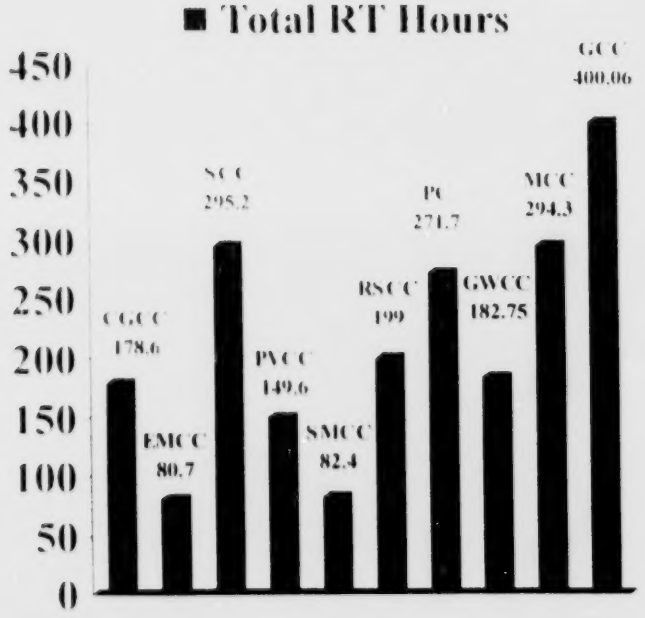
Reassigned Time (RT), In Hours, Received by Faculty in the MCCCD, By College, Per Semester

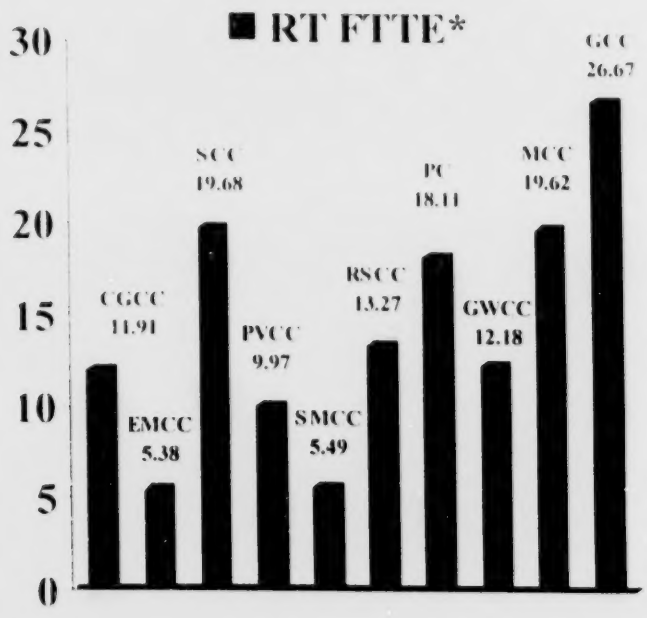
Table 2

COLLEGE	TOTAL RT HOURS	TOTAL FACULTY	TOTAL FACULTY RECEIVING RT	% of FACULTY WITH RT	MEAN RT
CGCC	178.6	60	35	58	5.1
EMCC	80.7	34	26	76	3.1
SCC	295.2	139	69	50	4.28
PVCC	149.6	73	25	34	5.98
SMCC	82.4	47	15	32	5.49
RSCC	199	19	19	100	10.47
PC	271.6	161	62	38.5	4.38
GWCC	182.75	69	38	55	4.8
MCC	294.3	247	53	21.45	5.55
GCC	400.06	212	97	45.74	4.13
TOTAL	2134.21	1061	439	41.37	4.86

Reassigned Time, in Hours, Expressed as Full Time Teaching Equivalents (FTTEs) in the MCCCD, by College, Per Semester

Table 3





TOTAL RT Hours = 2,134.21 RT FTTE* = 142.28

MEAN PER COLLEGE = 14.22

$$*\text{RT FTTE} = \frac{\text{RT HOURS PER SEMESTER}}{15}$$

Estimated Cost of Reassigned Time (RT) for Each College, Per Year, Using Average Residential Faculty Compensation* 1999-2000

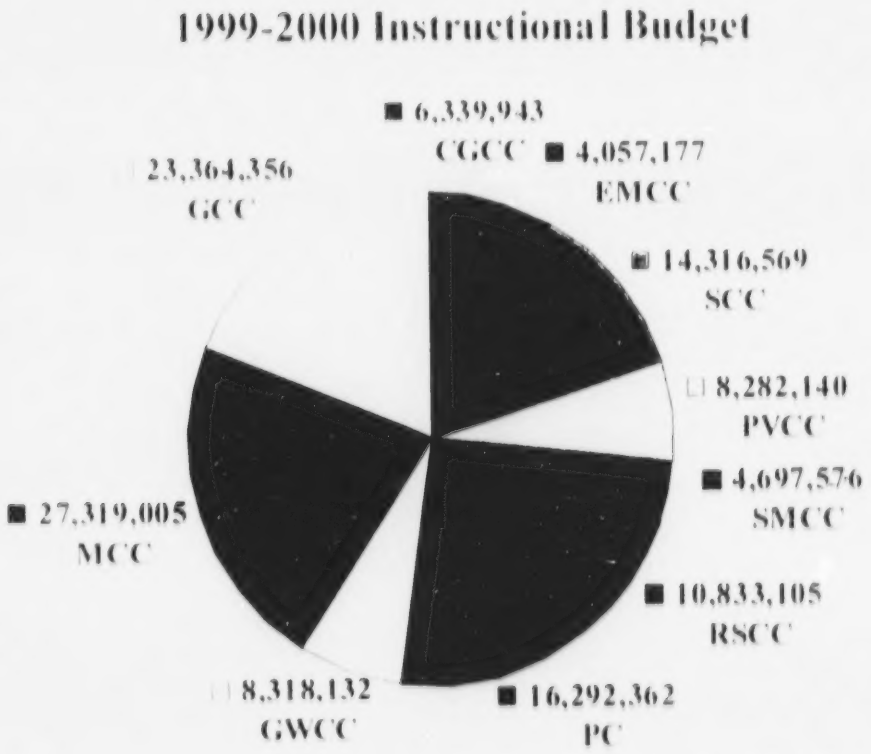
Table 4

COLLEGE	RT FTTE**	AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL FACULTY COMPENSATION PER FACULTY MEMBER PER YEAR	RT RESIDENTIAL FACULTY YEARLY COST***
CGCC	11.91	$70,895	$844,371
EMCC	5.38	$69,606	$359,959
SCC	19.68	$72,328	$1,423,434
PVCC	9.97	$71,386	$711,728
SMCC	5.49	$71,421	$392,106
RSCC	13.27	$70,463	$935,044
PC	18.11	$73,694	$1,334,598
GWCC	12.18	$70,159	$854,536
MCC	19.62	$74,741	$1,466,148
GCC	26.67	$74,628	$1,990,328
Total	142.28	$73,043 (mean)	$10,392,700

Average Cost Per College = $1,039,270 *Includes wages and benefits **Assumes the RT FTTE does not significantly change between semesters. *** RT FTTE Yearly Cost = RT FTTE X Average Residential Faculty Compensation

Yearly Reassigned Time Residential Faculty Cost as a % of Total College Instructional Budget, 1999-2000

Table 5



COLLEGE	YEARLY RT RESIDENTIAL FACULTY COST	YEARLY RT RESIDENTIAL FACULTY COST AS A % OF INSTRUCTIONAL BUDGET
CGCC	$844,371	13.32%
EMCC	$359,959	8.87%
SCC	$1,423,434	9.94%
PVCC	$711,728	8.59%
SMCC	$392,106	8.35%
RSCC	$935,106	8.63%
PC	$1,334,598	8.19%
GWCC	$854,536	10.27%
MCC	$1,466,418	5.37%
GCC	$1,990,328	8.52%
TOTAL	$10,392,700	8.37%

Ratio of Reassigned Time (RT) FTTE to the Total Faculty, at Each College per Semester.

Table 6

COLLEGE	RT FTTE	TOTAL FACULTY	% OF RESIDENTIAL FACULTY TEACHING TIME ENGAGED IN RT
CGCC	11.91	60	19.85%
EMCC	5.38	34	15.89%
SCC	19.68	139	14.20%
PVCC	9.97	73	13.65%
SMCC	5.49	47	11.68%
RSCC	13.27	19	69.84%
PC	18.11	161	11.24%
GWCC	12.18	69	17.65%
MCC	19.62	247	7.94%
GCC	26.67	212	12.58%
TOTAL	142.28	1061	13.40% (MEAN)

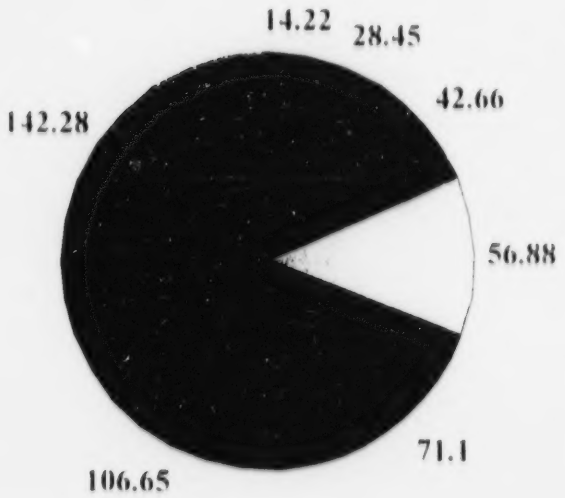
* "% of Faculty Teaching Time = RT FTTE/Total Faculty Engaged in RT Activities

FTTE and Financial Gain Generated from Selected Reductions in Reassigned Time

Table 7

Selected Reduction ⟶ ■ 10% ■ 20% ■ 30% □ 40% ■ 50% ■ 75% ■ 100%

Gain in FTTE



Financial Impact (Gain)